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A DEAN SPEAKS OUT.

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS SHOULD FACE THE CHALLENGE OF OVERCOMING OBSOLESCENT PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE STUDY OF LITERATURE TO THE NEEDS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY WHERE THERE IS EVIDENCE, EVEN IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS, OF A LARGER ROLE FOR THE HUMANIST. THE PROBLEMS OF FACULTY SHORTAGE AND "FOSSILIZED" CURRICULUMS ARE MAINLY THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN, WHO NOW OCCUPIES A POSITION OF COMMANDING LEADERSHIP. IN BUDGET MATTERS HIS FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF HIS DISCIPLINE. BECAUSE FACULTY MEMBERS ARE OFTEN ATTRACTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES OTHER THAN SALARY, HE SHOULD INITIATE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES WHICH CREATE A LIVELY, INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE. TO INSURE THIS ATMOSPHERE AND TO COMBAT OBSOLESCENCE, HE SHOULD ORGANIZE THE CURRICULUM WITH ALL PARTS MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE AND DELEGATE TO FACULTY MEMBERS MORE RESPONSIBILITY IN HELPING TO RUN THE DEPARTMENT. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE ADE BULLETIN," NUMBER 15, OCTOBER 1967, PAGES 12-17. (BN)

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NEWS NOTES

ADE extends cordial greetings to the 187 new chairmen of departments of English in four-year colleges and universities and to the 125 new chairmen in junior and community colleges and hopes that this issue of the Bulletin, which contains the principal papers of the Seminar for Chairmen held at Pennsylvania State University last June, will be of special interest. Additional copies are available from ADE for $.25.

George Anderson, who became chairman at Hawaii in September, has informally promised a luau for ADE members attending the NCTE Convention (23-26 November). Please inform us if you intend to be in Hawaii. Robert Daniel (Kenyon) and Kester Svendsen (Oregon), who are planning the ADE meeting in Chicago on the evening of 26 December, promise excellent papers and time for group discussion. The program will appear in the November Bulletin.

That issue should also contain information on next summer's seminar at the University of Chicago for newly-elected and recently-appointed chairmen. Dates for the meeting, the program, and other arrangements are now being planned.

The September PMLA contains both the Recommendations Concerning the Ph.D. in English and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English. Free copies of the Guidelines are available from ADE. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, who will publish Don Allen's report on the Ph.D. next spring, has agreed to distribute complimentary copies to all chairmen.

John Dixon's Growth Through English, which chairmen are receiving this fall, is one of the two important reports on the Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English held at Dartmouth in 1966. Herbert J. Muller's fascinating The Uses of English is available either from Holt, Rinehart or from NCTE.

Robert Daniel, 1967 Chairman of ADE, met with more than thirty chairmen in California late in September to discuss the Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English. Joining the chairmen were Albert Marckwardt, President of NCTE, Francis Herrick, Executive Secretary of the Western Colleges Association, Carl Larson, Chief of the Bureau of Teacher Education and Certification in California, and William Wise, President of the California Association of Teachers of English.

The MLA, NCTE, and Center for Applied Linguistics have received contracts from the USOE to establish Educational Resources Information Centers in

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A DEAN SPEAKS OUT

by Robert W. Rogers
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I am honored to have been asked to participate in these meetings, which raise memories of a pleasant period in my own career, when I was a department head. Aside from personal loyalties and inclinations, however, the place of the English department in the total scheme of any campus is very important indeed: obviously English departments are large in terms of both students and faculty; they also carry on vital educational functions, the teaching of freshman composition, a major role in general or liberal education, and the preparation of teachers at every level. A dean cannot ignore the central position of his English department or refuse a request to appear before a group of the discipline's distinguished and influential representatives.

I wish I could assure you who have taken on the responsibilities of directing departments of English that all will be well, that the tasks are easy ones, that you have reached the top of the profession where you may enjoy the peace and honor which you have clearly earned. Unhappily, I can give you no such assurances; there is before you only the prospect of frustration, anxiety, many nights away from home, long days -- with perhaps the possibility at the end of the kind of satisfaction that comes from having made a few small gains. The department chairman's life today, and for the foreseeable future, will not be as it was thirty, twenty, or even ten years ago. As the Red Queen remarked to Alice, "It takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast."

For the context in which we work is very different from that of two or three decades ago. There are new demands, new challenges, new ways of carrying out our assignments. Most obviously the American people have committed themselves to mass education beyond the high school, long before higher education has either the physical resources or the faculty resources to meet this commitment. The effective school age is now twenty or twenty-one. Trained faculty are necessary to meet not only the demands of undergraduate instruction but also the needs for additional college teachers. If we have the appearance of a flight from undergraduate instruction, this flight is occasioned more by the very pressing need of teaching at the graduate level than by any lack of concern for undergraduates. Alan Carter and others are looking at the statistics and predicting brighter days for faculty recruitment; but you will, for the duration of your tenure in office, probably not reach the pleasant land where candidates for vacant positions stand in line outside your offices.

American society has not been content with entrusting most of its youth to colleges and universities; it has also turned to these institutions for the solution of its social, political, economic, scientific, educational, psychological, and cultural problems. Until recently the English professor's counsel was not much sought after -- at least by government agencies more concerned with the search for means of providing the assurance of elementary survival, a job, security for old age, and adequate supplies of food. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has pointed, in the April (1967) Progressive, to new concerns of society which are finding expression in political attitudes. Professor Schlesinger's immediate subject is the present state of political liberalism; but his remarks have possible implications for English professors. He contends that whereas the 1930's "tackled the elemental needs of the American people," we are moving on "to qualitative tasks -- to measures, in other words, designed to improve the quality of life in an industrial society. These are the issues of civil rights, of civil liberties, of education, of urban planning, of the state of the arts, and the beauty of the environment." These issues, he concludes, "are no longer social and economic, so much as they are cultural and moral." If Professor Schlesinger is right -- and there is little evidence that he is not -- we can see only a larger role for the humanist in national affairs. We have already seen the English professor a participant in federal programs designed to improve the teaching of English; and we may see further use made of his insights and vision. The airports, so filled with scientists, may soon be

crowded with English professors (other than department chairmen is search of faculty) off on consulting missions. Clearly such responsibilities can only strain still more our slender resources as well as the stereotypes by which the activities of our discipline have traditionally been guided.

This brings me to a second challenge that is before you, the challenge of obsolescence. One does not have to read very much these days to understand how much of what we are doing -- and have accepted as correct, just and right -- is now being questioned. All of us have been at least mildly disturbed by the essays of William Arrowsmith, who most recently has remarked in the May (1967) College English:

> Is the humanist in actual practice concerned to make anything available from which his contemporaries might "build their own culture?" Does he judge the present? It would, I think, take considerable, and perverse, ingenuity to say that any of these tasks were performed by modern humanistic scholarship.
>
> Organization of the past? -- yes; sifting, rediscovering -- probably, yes; but judgment, translation into modern idiom, the providing of useful blueprints for contemporary culture? -- surely not. Indeed, the bulk of the job, and certainly the hardest part of the job, is never undertaken at all. In classical studies close, philological analysis of the text is almost never completed by critical interpretation; in English studies critical interpretation is very seldom completed by critical judgment.

Many of us are dreaming of answers we'd like to make to such blunt questioning of our cherished pursuits; but I've yet to hear or read a fully satisfying response. And unless we find a cogent one or make our work serve relevant and vital needs, then the discipline of English seems destined for the fate that has nearly overtaken Professor Arrowsmith's own discipline, the Classics.

Not unrelated to the kind of obsolescence that is the subject of Arrowsmith's concern are the questions being raised about our conventional programs for the preparation of young scholars -- future teachers for our colleges and universities. The Modern Language Association has sponsored discussions of the subject; and experiments at the University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University, the University of Virginia, and elsewhere seem aimed at remedies for some of the more outmoded and questionable features of the doctoral program. Ten of the prestigious universities that help set the pattern for graduate education have recently received from the Ford Foundation grants for new patterns of support for graduate study. The purpose of these grants is to cut down on the average amount of time required to complete requirements for the degree by reducing the necessity for engaging in activities that seem not to be intimately related to the educational purposes of pre-doctoral study. We cannot yet evaluate the full impact of this program upon graduate study; but the first responses are in. It seems clear that most major graduate programs will, from their own resources, have to make an effort to conform to the new pattern if they are to recruit good graduate students. If so, we shall also have to abandon one of our conventions, the assignment of freshman composition almost exclusively to graduate assistants whose need for financial support has too long been exploited and for whom other sources of help will now be available. Either senior professors will have to assume some responsibility for teaching freshman composition while the graduate students, happily supported by fellowships, are free to do on a full-time basis what they are supposed to do; or we shall have to change our ways of carrying on -- or thinking about -- the freshman course. It seems unlikely that the teaching assistant can be relied upon much longer to do the larger share of our basic work; we shall have to turn him back to what we tell the world he is doing -- studying and preparing for a professional career. We may quarrel with the Foundation's assumption that the difficulties of graduate study in English and other disciplines are primarily economic in nature; but at least a part of them are. And in the next few years we shall be forced directly to confront this particular source of difficulty.

Let me mention one other kind of obsolescence that plagues most departments, including English departments -- fossilized curricula that have no relevance to the present situation in higher education or indeed to any conceivable situation. Some curricula suggest only a lack of imagination and resourcefulness; some are built on nothing more than abstract models of a surrogate "contemporary world" that is really a reconstruction of some past epoch. Some reflect only the old myth that the best remedy for ignorance is another course, that the human mind is a bottle to be filled rather than a muscle to be exercised. Some fail to demonstrate a responsiveness to the motivations, interests, and concerns of the student in 1967. It requires no great insight to remark that the college-age generation today is very different from that of twenty or thirty years ago. Many in this generation are better trained in the high schools; many resent society's works, its pieties, its bomb, its failure to address itself courageously to the solution of social inequities. One might suppose that in their alienation young people would turn to literature for education, and many of them do, only to find dusty answers. To quote Professor Arrowsmith again: "Literature occupies a place in the curriculum presumably because it educates. If it does not, then it should not be taught. Yet the old educational function of literature is often not honored at all, or only as a traditional inheritance -- or something we go on doing out of habit rather than conviction. Or what is more likely, scholars have more and more come to regard the educational function of the arts as something suspect, embarrassingly old-fashioned. A century of aesthetic insistence upon the autonomy of the work of art has made critics uneasy about ascribing an educational function to literature; didacticism is not in vogue." What are we doing to help sutdents, whose concern is the cultivation of individuality and personal enjoyment, to appreciate the necessity for self-discipline and service. We all prize individuality, especially in a society prone to think in stereotypes and statistical norms; but we cannot turn education into a substitute for psychedelic experience. I think we also neglect in our work the fact that we now face students brought up on television, the Beach Boys, Herman's Hermits, and Mod clothes, students whose sensory experiences are far greater than those we had. What are we doing to discipline and refine these senses in a way that will enable students better to enjoy life -- or at least better to endure it? I believe the study of literature, imaginatively pursued and addressed to the needs of contemporary society, has a great deal to say to the present times -- but not if our recollection of what we were and did thirty years ago completely dictates what we teach and how we teach.

In addition to the shortage of faculty and the problem of obsolescence, there are other challenges to be met, the pressures for conformity, the insistence that effort be evaluated in terms of direct, observable results, the fight for additional resources. The existence of all of them lead to one conclusion, that the department chairman today has unusual responsibilities and duties. Although deans and department chairmen are sometimes thought to be natural enemies, let me assert that the department chairman is now central to the success of any college or university. Deans may be good or bad -- they may come and go -- but without a good chairman, a basic agent of institutional vitality is weakened. Charles H. Heimler, in the spring (1967) Educational Record discusses the position of the department chairman, noting that the decentralization of decision-making authority in American colleges and the rising influence of faculty members in the formulation of institutional policy have led to a rearrangement of the academic power structure, with the department chairman now occupying a position of commanding leadership. He is directly responsible for the operation of his department: he has substantial control over budgets, semester schedules, and faculty assignments. He is a key figure in relations with students: program planning course selection, student petitions. Chairmen can support or undermine institutional policy: they can exert creative leadership in furthering educational developments; or they can reinforce the existing resistance to educational change. They can establish the character of their departments by stressing one kind of activity at the expense of another -- teaching over research, for example.

Ideally, in academic life, the department should have a collective responsibility for leadership, with the chairman acting only as an executive agent who carries out the will of his colleagues. Under this arrangement rotation of the chairmanship is possible, with each member of the department serving his turn in the office before joyfully returning to

research and teaching. Unhappily the complexities of administration in higher education make this traditional pattern of academic governance largely impossible; the day of the amateur has passed. A chairman now must be cognizant of the main developments in the discipline and profession of English in order to insure the relevance of his department's work and to select for his faculty the most promining, vital, lively teachers and scholars that the profession can offer. This duty means, of course, extensive and systematic reading in scholarly, pedagogical, and professional literature; it means cultivating efforts to meet and exchange ideas with one's colleagues; it means full participation in the life of professional organizations such as the NCTE, the MLA, and the ADE. It means an interest in the problems of the secondary schools which supply students to the colleges and those of the graduate colleges from which young members of the profession are recruited. It means familiarity with the programs of the Office of Education, the National Humanities Foundation, and the private foundations that stand ready to support innovative proposals that give promise of making a difference.

There are three specific areas of internal operation that I shall mention. One of these is budget, which, after all, is the means by which departmental aspirations are frequently realized. Here I would simply note the existence of two kinds of chairmen. One takes pride in how much he can save for his institution, in how cheaply he can run his operation, in how much he can turn back to his dean at the end of the year; the other is the chairman who tries to gain all he can for his department and to make that all go as far as possible in achieving academic objectives. Every dean has both kinds of chairmen; but, in my own view, the first should be ousted as promptly as possible -- preferably by his colleagues, otherwise by his dean -- for he is leading his department nowhere. A department chairman has only a secondary responsibility to his institution; his primary obligation is the advancement of his discipline. It is the dean's job, not the chairman's, to see that funds are allocated justly and fairly -- and in a manner consistent with the college's overall goals and purposes. The hard choices that such allocations often involve are what the dean is paid for; the department chairman who takes upon himself these responsibilities is outrageously presumptuous, downright impertinent.

A second area of concern for the department chairman is his faculty. Here there are no simple formulae, no prescriptions by which he can hope to meet all situations; there are only complicated tangles that must be worked out generally on an ad hoc basis with imagination, sympathy, and understanding. Obviously every chairman must recruit and keep the best possible teacher-scholars -- a task that is particularly difficult in times of great faculty mobility, when institutional loyalty seems no longer to be a significant force in the scholar's decisions about his professional career. Some chairmen dream that the problems of retention could be met if only they could pay higher salaries -- salaries like those thought to be paid at Harvard, California, or Illinois: it is true that gold can achieve successes for a time; but my own observation is that the faculty member of the 1960's, given the general level of salaries, is more likely to be attracted by circumstances other than gold. First of all, he wants the kind of assurance that comes from the knowledge that he will receive fair, just, and reasonable treatment in the matters of salary and promotion. He wants to know that the chairman is interested in him as an individual, is aware of his particular strengths, interests, and weaknesses. This awareness is basic in the conduct of departmental affairs, because the good chairman will exploit those strengths of each faculty member to the advantage of both the individual and the department. Some faculty members obviously have a great capacity for research, a capacity that should be cultivated; but other faculty members have a greater capacity for teaching. Still others have administrative abilities; and higher education needs humanistically oriented administrators. Others are by nature and ability interested in the problems of education, or the training of teachers. I know that most forces of academia work in favor of the scholar-researcher, the one who gains "national visibility" for himself, his department, and his institution through a quantity of publications. To be perfectly candid and realistic, however, I doubt that there is any English department in the country that can boast of more that two or three scholars whose contributions to knowledge and understanding are truly seminal, truly make a difference; yet we tend to hope that all will aspire to this model so very difficult

to achieve. I doubt that the duties, responsibilities, and commitments of an English department are going to be fulfilled if the only object of our solicitude, concern, and reward is the research specialist. Every person in academic life who performs his role well has a claim upon the rewards that his life bestows. Where we fail to acknowledge distinction in the teaching of freshman composition or in educational programs for the culturally disadvantaged, we admit by implication that these are second-class activities; and we thereby encourage only second-class persons to assume responsibiltiy for them. We do ourselves, our discipline, and higher education no service when we fail to give unstinting support to each of our commitments.

What is also more important than salary to most faculty members is the existence of vitality, a lively intellectual atmosphere, and assurance that something meaningful is happening in a department. Undertakings and projects capable of stimulating the imaginations of bright, alert people can accomplish a great deal in the academic marketplace. I don't mean motion for the sake of motion; but movement that gives promise of working towards well-defined and academically desirable ends. One of my more cynical chairmen once remarked to me, when his department was in some turmoil over resignations, that he was setting his colleagues on a large project of curriculum planning that would take their minds off their other problems. It's not bawdy but curricula in which every faculty member will happily join. I would not endorse the narrow pragmatism of my chairman; but I would emphasize that a concern for what is taught and how it is to be taught is central to academic life. With our rapidly expanding knowledge of the whole educational process, we have been able to ask many more questions about what we are and should be doing; and our professional journals reveal the extent of our ferment over curricular matters. Should we emphasize the historical or analytical approach to literature? What emphasis should be given to the didactic or ethical implications of literature; should we "educate" in the Arrowsmithian sense? How shall we reconcile the demands of general education and those of pre-professional training? What is the role of linguistics in the teaching of composition? How should the special needs of the culturally disadvantaged by met? What should be the nature of the honor's program? What is the role of Advanced Placement? Is the large lecture course taught by a first-rate lecturer less effective than the small discussion class? How far should we go with programs of independent study? What are the uses of audio-visual aids? Shall we establish a Ph.D. program in order to strengthen the department's total program?

All these, and many more, are lively questions to which any department, not hopelessly moribund, must address itself. It is obvious that our way of looking at the curriculum has been profoundly influenced by the technological tone of our age, the fact that students can be engineered into educated citizens by a manipulation of courses and techniques. While we deplore this fact, we must accept it and choose among technologies. The department chairman is central in determining how successfully his department does so. He creates the forums that make fruitful discussion possible; he is generally in the best position to secure the financial support as well as the support of the general faculty. He also has, or should have, the extensive knowledge of the state of English that helps in the evaluation of proposals.

There are in higher education very great pressures on any department to follow the example of other departments and to answer curricular need as the others are doing. The most obvious example is the pervasive conviction that every department should proceed to offer graduate programs, a development that is potentially disastrous. As a consultant-examiner for the North Central Association, I have had to examine several institutions that have chosen to proceed to doctoral programs; and my colleagues as well as I have often been concerned about the failure of some of these universities adequately to assess the tremendous costs of doctoral programs -- or even to recognize clearly the effects that such programs may have upon a good undergraduate curriculum. The usual argument supporting such proposals is that other comparable institutions are doing the same thing. The true test of vitality in education is, however, not action that is imitative but action that is original, fresh, and meaningful. It often falls upon the chairman courageously to remind his department that English is a house of many mansions and not all departments must occupy the same rooms.

Any major curriculum change must be undertaken only with a due regard for the resources existing within a department, strengths which the chairman should be in the best position to know. What gives a dean anxiety, even nightmares, is the department which is always ready with notions of what ought to be done, scattered proposals that bear little relationship to the facts or circumstances of the institution or the department or to each other. Even the largest and most opulent institutions cannot undertake everything and hope to do all superbly: there is not that much money in the world. So departments must choose among alternatives; and their choices should be based on the potential for quality that already exists in them. The liveliest and best departments are those in which we find curricula with all parts mutually supportive and in which other resources are clearly at hand or at least readily obtainable.

The best departments, those in which there are vital energies working in fruitful ways, nearly all have five- or ten-year plans of development -- blueprints if you will -- in which existing strengths are inventoried, goals are set forth, and specific requirements for systematic, orderly growth are detailed. A department which fails to have such plans is in a very bad situation, indeed: it is condemned always to improvise, to react. A dean is human; and he likes to know that his departments are going somewhere -- have formulated clear and academically defensible objectives. If you want to be starved, just give your dean the impression that you're unsure of where you're going, that you are wallowing without a course in a tempestuous sea.

All I have said points up the thesis that the department chairman has a very important position in academic life today; it also points up the fact that his position is burdensome and difficult. The difficulties are, I assure you, a source of widespread concern; and Pennsylvania State, Indiana, and my own university have undertaken studies to define the extent of these difficulties as well as means of alleviating them. Generally, the chairman is overworked, burdened with clerical tasks and hampered by arbitrary and often senseless institutional procedures. My advice to all chairmen is not to try to do the task alone; don't fear the snide comments of your colleagues or merry references to Parkinson's law. Wise administration demands that you bring your faculty into the business of running the department, to appoint your colleagues to committees -- committees that work. For executive functions get yourselves at least a vice-chairman or, if your department is large, at least two. Hire a bright B.A. or M.A. or a retired military officer (one without a military point of view) to serve as an administrative aid. Make your dean increase his staff with persons having functional duties that are more properly handled in his office than they can be in your department. I present these recommendations to you in great seriousness; for the chairman who is to exercise the kind of educational leadership his position now requires must have time for study, reflection, and meditation; he must not allow himself to be overwhelmed by routine, day-to-day operations. A chairman should be sure to take his summers off and see that there are at least a thousand miles between him and his campus. He should use every artifice of persuasion he can muster to convince his dean that he should have an extra sabbatical after, say, every three years in office instead of the usual six.

I would not conclude without emphasizing that, in spite of the duties and difficulties of the chairmanship, these are good times to occupy positions of leadership; they are times when it is possible for one to have an effect upon higher education. Higher education is in transition, as we engage in a great national experiment of mass education beyond the high school and of direct, practical contribution to social needs. It's a time when liberal education, though never more needed for human survival, is most seriously threatened by the forces of specialization and professionalism. It's a time of ferment and change. No one knows what the outcome will be; but we do know that a happy one will probably depend upon the vision and dedication of all department chairmen, some faculty members, and possibly a few deans.